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AMASH LEADS LETTER TO NSA, FBI ON PHONE TRACKING

BIPARTISAN COALITION WANTS ANSWERS FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES ON WIDESPREAD SNOOPING

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Justin Amash (R-MI) led a bipartisan coalition of House members in a letter to the NSA and FBI demanding more information about the government’s telephone tracking program.

The Guardian reported late last night that a secret surveillance court has ordered a Verizon subsidiary continuously to turn over “telephony metadata” to the NSA, the Defense Department agency that is supposed to focus on foreign intelligence.

The leaked secret court order reveals that data associated with potentially tens of millions of Americans have been handed over to the NSA, including telephone numbers, the time and duration of calls, and geolocation data. It is not known whether the transmitted information includes data about Internet use.

“The astonishing amount of information the government is secretly seizing from Americans should shock anyone who has even a passing interest in privacy, civil liberties, or the Constitution,” said Amash. “The government is vacuuming up data on every call made by every customer of a major phone company. This sort of sweeping surveillance is not even plausibly authorized by statute, let alone the Constitution.”

Twenty-five Representatives signed the letter to Robert Mueller, Director of the FBI, and Keith Alexander, the head of the NSA. The letter asks for specific information about the government’s surveillance, including the frequency of the practice and the agencies’ legal justification.

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